

REMARKS

In this reply, Applicant amends claims 1, 3-5, and 7-9; and adds new claims 10-20. Claims 1-20 are thus currently pending. The changes and additions to the claims find non-limiting support in the originally-filed application, for example from p. 24, l. 20 to p. 26, l. 8 of the specification, in steps A-2 and A-3 of Fig. 5, and in original claims 3, 4, and 7-9. No new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite; claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niitsuma et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0050782 A1, "Niitsuma") in view of Maeda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,791,703 B1, "Maeda"); claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda, further in view of Seseek (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0171864 A1, "Seseek"); and claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda and Seseek, further in view of Kuroda (U.S. Patent No. 6,804,020 B1, "Kuroda").

In response to the rejection of claim 5 as being indefinite, Applicant amends claim 5 to recite "the same as control that would be performed with respect to the output limitation if an image based on image data were to be printed in the at least one of said image printing apparatuses without the mediacy of said information processing means." Applicant submits that amended claim 5 is now sufficiently definite. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of the rejection of amended claim 5 as being indefinite.

In response to the rejection of claims 1-6 as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda, and in the spirit of moving prosecution forward, Applicant amends claim 1 to recite “apparatus ID storage means for storing an apparatus ID which specifies a self image printing apparatus that comprises said apparatus ID storage means” and “control means for determining whether or not the transfer source of said image data is the self image printing apparatus by confirming whether or not the apparatus ID received by said second image data reception means coincides with an apparatus ID which specifies the self image printing apparatus stored in said apparatus ID storage means, and when said transfer source of said image data is not the self image printing apparatus, causing said image printing means to print an image based on the image data received by said second image data reception means on the basis of a limitation set by said external data output limitation setting means.” Applicant submits that Niitsuma and Maeda, whether taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest at least these features of amended independent claim 1.

Regarding Niitsuma, the Office Action concedes at pages 6-8 that Niitsuma “fails to teach [the] second image transmission means . . . , second image data reception means . . . , and control means . . .” of independent claim 1. Therefore, Applicant submits that Niitsuma also fails to teach or suggest the aforementioned features of amended independent claim 1, which define even further the control means of claim 1 that the Office Action concedes Niitsuma fails to teach.

Regarding Maeda, which is directed to an “image processing apparatus [that] allows a user to obtain only data on a desirable WWW (World Wide Web) server and print the obtained data” (abstract), Applicant submits that Maeda fails to teach or

suggest at least an “apparatus ID storage means for storing an apparatus ID which specifies a self image printing apparatus that comprises said apparatus ID storage means” and “control means for determining whether or not the transfer source of said image data is the self image printing apparatus by confirming whether or not the apparatus ID received by said second image data reception means coincides with an apparatus ID which specifies the self image printing apparatus stored in said apparatus ID storage means,” as recited in amended independent claim 1. Specifically, Applicant submits that Maeda’s digital copier knows when it retrieves data to be printed from a WWW server on the Internet that the WWW server, not the digital copier, is the source of the data, and thus that Maeda’s digital copier need not and does not determine “whether or not the transfer source of said image data is the self image printing apparatus by confirming whether or not the apparatus ID received by said second image data reception means coincides with an apparatus ID which specifies the self image printing apparatus.”

Applicant further submits that Maeda fails to teach or suggest “external data output limitation setting means for setting a limitation associated with image printing of image data which is transferred from an apparatus as a transfer source other than the self image printing apparatus” and “when said transfer source of said image data is not the self image printing apparatus, causing said image printing means to print an image . . . on the basis of a limitation set by said external data output limitation setting means,” as recited in amended independent claim 1. Specifically, Applicant submits that whereas Maeda discloses a user information table including user name and password information for the users and “a table concerning user information that includes

limitations” (see Figs. 24-25 and c. 13, l. 54 to c. 14, l. 52), Maeda’s limitations are user specific and are not set by an “external data output limitation setting means” in the self image printing apparatus as a basis for printing an image “when said transfer source of said image data is not the self image printing apparatus,” as recited in amended independent claim 1.

Therefore, Applicant submits that Niitsuma and Maeda, whether taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all the features of amended independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of the rejection of amended independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2-6 as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda.

In response to the rejection of claims 7 and 8 as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda, further in view of SeseK, Applicant submits that SeseK fails to teach or suggest at least the aforementioned features of independent claim 1 not taught by Niitsuma and Maeda. Therefore, Applicant submits that Niitsuma, Maeda, and SeseK, whether taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all the features of claims 7 and 8, which depend from amended independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of the rejection of claims 7 and 8 as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda, further in view of SeseK.

In response to the rejection of claim 9 as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda and SeseK, further in view of Kuroda, Applicant submits that Kuroda fails to teach or suggest at least the aforementioned features of independent claim 1 not taught by Niitsuma, Maeda, and SeseK. Therefore, Applicant submits that Niitsuma,

Maeda, Sesek, and Kuroda, whether taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all the features of claim 9, which depends from amended independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of the rejection of claim 9 as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda and Sesek, further in view of Kuroda.

In addition, Applicant adds new claims 10-20 to vary the scope of protection recited in the claims. New claims 10-16 are new dependent claims that were added to separately list certain claims that were originally presented in an improper multiple-dependent claim format. New independent claim 17 and its dependent claims 18-20 recite features similar to those of claims 1-3, 6, and 7. New claims 10-20 are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons discussed above.

Finally, Applicant noticed that the nonpatent literature document listed in the PTO/SB/08 form filed on May 16, 2007, does not appear to have been formally acknowledged as being considered by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner indicate on the PTO/SB/08 form with appropriate markings that this document has been considered by the Examiner.

Because the Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and prior art with which Applicant does not necessarily agree, Applicant declines to subscribe to any such characterizations unless expressly set forth in this paper.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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